STEPHEN COLWELL

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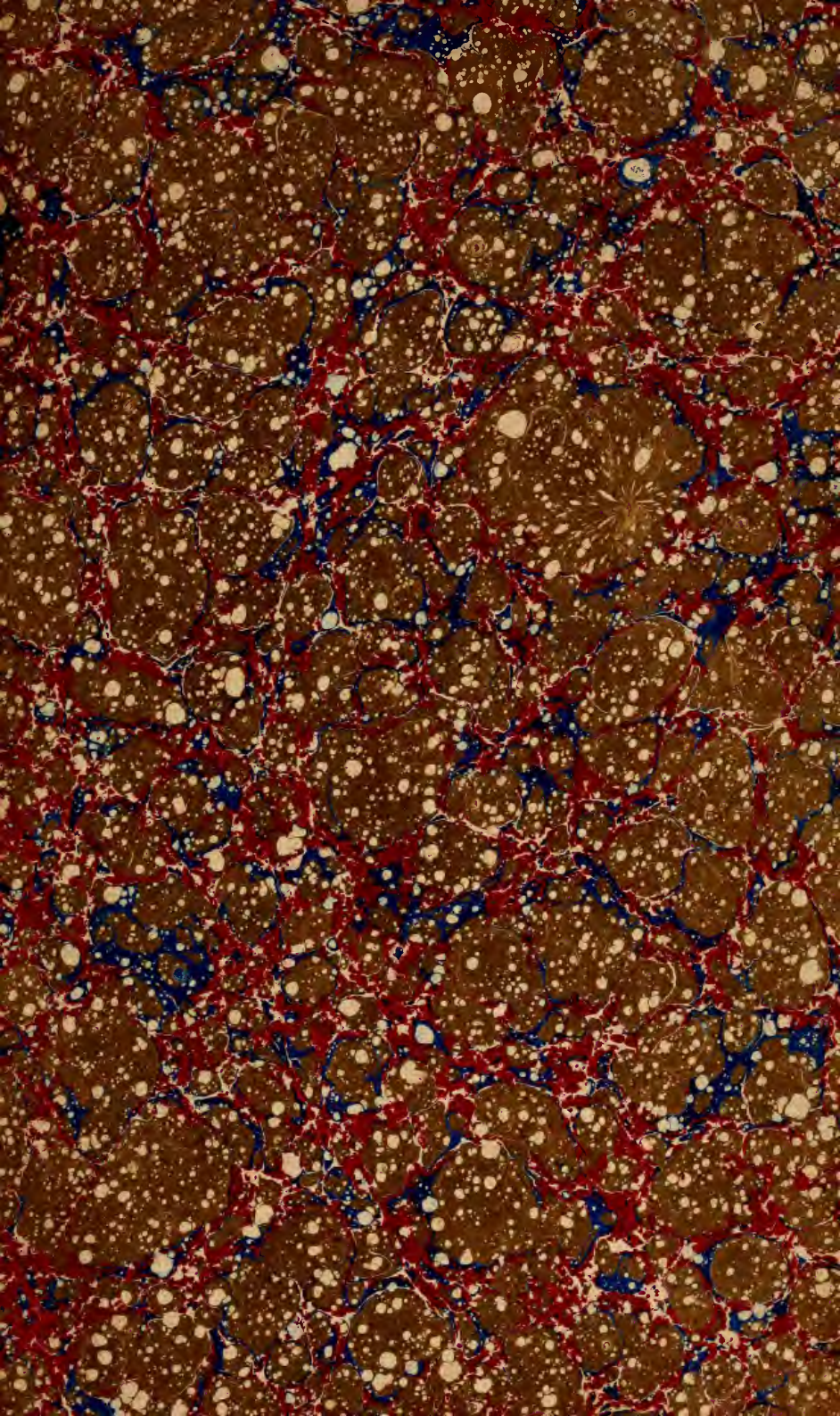

A MEMOIR

OF

STEPHEN COLWELL:

READ BEFORE THE

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1871:

BY

HENRY C. CAREY.

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MEMOIR.

A life protracted considerably beyond the allotted threescore years and ten has brought me, in the course of nature, to the position of survivor to a host of personal friends whose lives had made them worthy of the remembrance in which they yet are held by those who had known them best. Of one of the worthiest of those whom I have familiarly known, and for their words and their works have most esteemed, it is that, in accordance with the request with which the Society has honored me, I have prepared the brief memoir that will now be read. For its preparation and for the proper performance of duty to the departed, to his surviving friends, and to the public which has a property in his memory, I claim to have little qualification beyond that resulting from long and familiar personal acquaintance; from a fellowship in the public labors to which were devoted so many of his life's best years; and from an earnest desire to aid in perpetuating the recollection thereof in the minds of those in whose service such labors had been performed.

An ardent pursuit of the same general course of study, in a yet unsettled department of inquiry, tends necessarily to the development of difference in modes of thought, even where, as has been the case with

Mr. Colwell and myself, the end in issue is substantially the same. Between us, however, there has never been any essential difference, and while it has been among the highest gratifications of my life, it has not been least of the assurances that have sustained me in my own course of speciality of labor, that his views of social and economic theory have so nearly coincided with those which I had been led to form.

This general coincidence of doctrine is here offered as a reason for avoiding that indulgence in eulogy of his literary labors which so justly is their due. A still stronger reason for preferring to allow the simplest and plainest history of his works to indicate his worth, is found in that modesty which constituted so striking a feature in his character, respect for which forbids that I should here say of him anything that would have been unacceptable if said in his bodily presence. That I can entirely restrain within these limits the expression of my apprehension of his character, and of his life's work, I do not say; but that I feel the repressive influence of this regard correspondent with the habitual deference which has throughout many years of intercourse governed my demeanor towards him, is very certain. Further than this, however, it will be enough for praise if I can succeed in making this memoir an adequate report of his active and energetic life.

Having thus explained the feelings by which I have been influenced, I shall now proceed to give such facts as have been attainable in regard to his

unwritten history, and such indices of the works he has left behind him, as seem to claim a prominent place, and can be made to fall within the compass of the brief time allowed me for their presentation.

Stephen Colwell was born in Brooke County, West Virginia, on the 25th of March, 1800. He died in Philadelphia on the 15th of January, 1871, having nearly completed his 71st year. He received his classical education at Jefferson College, Canonsburg, Washington County, Pa., where he graduated in 1819. He studied law under the direction of Judge Halleck in Steubenville, Ohio; was admitted to the Bar in 1821; practised the profession seven years in St. Clairsville, Ohio; and in 1828 removed to Pittsburgh where he continued so to do until the year 1836.

Indicative of that ability and industry which marked his whole subsequent life, and now so well accounts for the mass and quality of his attainments, are the facts that he graduated at the early age of nineteen, and entered upon his profession at twenty-one.

The practice of the law, however, was not the sphere of mental activity for which by tastes and talents he had been best by nature fitted. The study of this science was, nevertheless, a happy preparation for the inquiries in whose pursuit he afterwards became so much engrossed. Its exacter method, doubtless, corrected the mental habitude and the narrowing influence which an ardent mind is apt to catch from an exclusive devotion to the study of any

single branch of literature or science. His writings everywhere bear witness in logic and in diction to the corrective influence of his legal acquirements. Social Science is that department of knowledge which especially receives its verification and practical adjustment in jurisprudence and civil government applied—the philosophy of Law being the crown and summary of sociology in all its branches.

Further, Mr. Colwell gave for a layman an unusual amount of study to the department of religious literature, and here also we find the guiding influence of his sociologic as well as of his legal training. A devoted religionist from earliest youth to the close of life, he gave himself to an ardent study of doctrine and of duty, meanwhile laboring as zealously and almost as constantly as if he had filled the office of pastor in the church, in the propagation of such opinions as demanded conformity of life from professors of religion. His publications bear witness of his faithfulness, as his life in its every relation illustrated the morality and the charity which his faith enjoined.

It is not for us to sit in judgment upon religious doctrines, whether to applaud or to condemn them. His well known zeal, and his abundant labors in piety and charity, are here adduced for the simple reason that the portraiture of the man would be incomplete and most unworthy of its subject without distinct recognition of a feature so predominant in his character.

Were I here to venture an opinion, fully warranted perhaps by the subject, I should be disposed to say

that the study of the theologian must be greatly influenced for safer direction and better uses when held in logical harmony with, and restrained of its speculative tendencies by, those rules of thought which must govern men in the actual duties and relations of life. To my mind it is clearly obvious that the religious writings of Mr. Colwell exhibit a healthy tone and a useful drift reflected from his economic studies; and in these latter a faithfulness of service and a dedication of spirit and endeavor, which happily illustrate the moral responsibility resulting from the sentiments of the former. To this I may perhaps be allowed to add, that if each and every man occupying an influential position could be induced with equal fidelity and ability to "show his faith by his works," the prevailing indifference to the claims of Christianity would speedily give place to a widely different spirit induced by the attractiveness of its illustration. Here, however, I am engaged mainly with the prominent traits of Mr. Colwell's own character and the influences that formed his life and gave direction to it. His education and effective development were not found alone in the studies by which he was so largely and so usefully occupied. Whatever of principle and policy resulted from the application of the student was induced and enriched and energized in another and even more exact training school than any that the speculations of science can afford. In the thirty-sixth year of his age, fresh and full of all that reading and reflection could supply, he entered upon the conduct of business affairs in an occupation

that as much as any other, and probably even more, brought into service and severely tested both economic facts and principles. He became a manufacturer of iron first at Weymouth, Atlantic County, New Jersey, and afterwards at Conshohocken, on the Schuylkill. Throughout a quarter of a century of vicissitudes, inflicted upon that department of manufacture more mischievously than upon almost any other by an inconstant and often unfriendly governmental policy, opportunity was presented, as the necessity was imposed, for studying the interests of productive industry in the light of such actual and greatly varied experiences as might instruct even the dullest, and could not fail to teach one already so well qualified for promptly understanding all that actually concerned that and every other branch of industrial production. Before entering upon the arduous and trying experiences of this pursuit he had visited Europe, and there had studied the art and management of its advanced and varied industries.

The settlement of the large estate of his father-in-law, the late Samuel Richards, and the administration of those of several other members of his family, required and received as much attention during many years as would have constituted the entire business of many men who would have thought themselves fully occupied. In addition to private affairs, so considerable and so exacting, he was constantly engaged as a leading and working member of various public associations; industrial, mercantile, benevolent, and educational. The cha-

racter, the extent, and the variety of these engagements, to which he was invariably attentive and punctual, may be inferred from a simple enumeration by their titles, as follows: he was a working member of the American Iron and Steel Association, from its origin to the close of his life; an active member of the African Colonization Society for more than a score of years; several years engaged in the management of our House of Refuge; nearly twenty years a Director of the Camden and Atlantic Railroad, whose Board of Directors, in a feeling notice of his death, say that, "having been an active member of the Board from its organization, and having contributed very largely of his means, time, and labor in the prosecution and completion of this work; in many dark periods of this enterprise we could always look to Mr. Colwell for his matured judgment and able counsel."

He was a Director in the Reading and in the Pennsylvania Central Railroads, and for years held the office and performed the duties of a Trustee of the University of Pennsylvania; as also a similar position in the Princeton Theological Seminary. Simultaneously therewith, he was one of the Trustees of the Presbyterian General Assembly, and member of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church. After the close of the Rebellion he gave large pecuniary assistance, and his usual energy of service, to the Freedman's Aid Society, as during the Rebellion he had contributed with like liberality to the work of both the Sanitary and Christian Commissions. Of his services in these

great patriotic charities a gentleman well acquainted with their history says: "At the breaking out of the Rebellion he felt deeply for the distress in the camps and on the battlefield, and it was at his suggestion that the first man who left his home to assist the helpless and the wounded, took his way to the seat of war. He also contributed freely to supply comforts to those in the hospitals. To one of the acting stewards he said, 'Let nothing be wanting, and, if the Government funds are insufficient, I will see that the bills are paid.'" The same witness of his active benevolence to the suffering soldiers, and of his personal demeanor in its administration, further says: "Those who accompanied him on his visits to the Army of the Potomac, can never forget the kindness and respect with which he treated the humblest individuals."

In the patriotic services and sacrifices to which the country called its best citizens in the hour of its utmost need, he was, in every form of duty, one of the earliest, most constant, persistent, and efficient of the men in private life who gave themselves unreservedly to the salvation of the Union. The Union League of this city, in words which well might serve as a condensed memoir of his life and character, bears this testimony to his agency in the great work of their association: "With an intelligent and thoughtful mind, fully convinced of the necessity and usefulness of such an organization, and a heart warmly alive to its encouraging influences, it was peculiarly fitting that at the first formal meeting which led to the establishment of

the Union League Mr. Colwell should be called upon, as he was, to preside. His name thus heads the list of signers of the constitution of the League; and he grew with its growth, ever in the forefront of whatever movement was planned for giving aid and comfort and support to his country and its government throughout the course of its struggle for existence, in resisting, by force of arms, a causeless and wicked armed Rebellion." Of his personal character and demeanor, they say: "We desire to bear testimony to those virtues which manifested themselves in all his intercourse with us; to the singleness and unselfishness of his purpose; to his courteousness and urbanity in our varied relations; to his firmness, cautiousness, and wisdom in the deliberations of our councils; to his patience, unwearying industry, and cheerful devotion of time, abilities, and means in aid of the cause so dear to all our hearts; to his constant, unwavering joy, and faith, and trust in the overruling providence of the God of our fathers amid the darkest hours of the country's peril, as well as in times of success and victory."

Such engagements as these, and numerous others kindred in their character and calling for similar labors, filled the middle and later periods of his life with occupation: his associates, and all with whom business intercourse and public enterprises connected him, testifying to the prompt, energetic, patient, and worthy performance of every duty thus assumed or imposed. Nearly half a century employed in public and private affairs making large demands for

labor and care, and involving great responsibility, gave him that sound practical experience which well and effectively woven into the studies of his life made him what he eminently became, a clear, safe, and thoroughly instructed economist. Concurrently with this practical training he was, in the best sense and fullest meaning of the word, a student. As early as his business life began, if not even earlier, he commenced the collection of a library of social science, political economy, finance, pauperism, organized charities, productive industries, and associate and cognate departments of science, now the largest and best to be found in the country. This grand collection has not been catalogued, or even classified, but it considerably exceeds five thousand volumes, and is estimated for the purpose of insurance at a value of twenty thousand dollars. To this library and to the books, pamphlets, periodical and newspaper articles of his own production, he devoted all his leisure. In several lists of cited authorities appended to his own publications and criticisms upon them, he furnishes evidence that he was, in the language of one of his familiar acquaintances, "one of the greediest of readers."

To the commonly accepted authorities on Political Economy, Finance, and Policy of Public Affairs, he, however, gave no more than that amount of faith and acceptance which they should command from a mind well stored with the facts and philosophy of their subjects. To a friend who expressed surprise at his vast collection of books and pam-

phlets on the single subject of Money, he replied, when asked if he had perused them all, "enough to know that there is really little or nothing in them of any value."

His library, besides its completeness in standard works, derives a special value from its collection of over twenty-five hundred pamphlets on topics usually embraced in what is called Political Economy; each separately bound and capable of classified arrangement. He regarded, and justly too, such smaller treatises as especially valuable for containing the best thoughts of the writers in the most condensed form, and likely thus to secure not only the greatest number but the most attentive of readers. For the most part he put his own publications on social and economic subjects into this unpretending form.

His judgment was too clear and too well poised to suffer the imposture of pretentious authorship. Knowing that book-makers are not always thinkers he gave his regards to those writers only who had something of their own to say, or knew how to give effective array to the valuable words of others. It would have been an excellent service to students, now abandoned to their own unformed judgment in the selection of works in this department, and thus condemned to promiscuous reading, if Mr. Colwell had in some effective way employed his eminent discernment in giving us an *index expurgatorius* of the books and treatises upon economic subjects which crowd our libraries, thus driving a stake through the worthless and the false among them, numerous as

these latter are. In his Essay Preliminary to List's Political Economy, he has, indeed, shown his eminent capacity for estimating aright the economic authorities at their true value, confining himself, however, almost entirely to an analysis and commendation of those works which are worthy of reliance. It was more consonant with his taste and tendencies to select the good, than to annoy himself with the study and exposure of that which was calculated to be injurious. Often have I wondered at the patience, even more than at the diligence, great as it was, with which he conscientiously surrendered so large a portion of his months and his years to library labors. His toil, however, was made available for excellent uses, and the fruits of his literary industry exhibit themselves not only in the number but also in the value of his publications. Of that value but little can be traced to the thousands of volumes which had passed through his hands. Indeed, it is curiously significant that the best read man in economic literature stands now before us so little indebted to the books of his predecessors for the most valuable portions of his own productions. Never writing without having something worthy to be read, all that he did write was, as largely as can be affirmed of any other prolific author, in matter and manner his own. There was in him, however, nothing of arrogance, nothing of the scorner. In the whole course of his literary pursuits may be discovered a constant effort to promote and propagate important scientific truths bearing upon social welfare, under cover of such books as seemed to him to

deserve extensive circulation. To the translation, annotation, and effective distribution of these he freely and devotedly gave his time, his labor, and his means. Among the leading instances of this kind, is the translation, by Mr. Matile, of List's National System of Political Economy, with his own invaluable Preliminary Essay, above referred to, and with copious marginal notes upon the text, from his own pen. In like manner he procured the translation (again by Mr. Matile) and the publication, for liberal distribution, of Chastel's "Charity of the Primitive Churches;" and also the republication of "The Race for Riches," by William Arnot, of Glasgow, with a corroborative preface and notes, by himself supplied.

This would be the place for giving special attention to that long and varied catalogue of his own contributions to the literature of political economy, finance, charity, and Christian ethics, in the form of pamphlets and essays, and other articles in the reviews, periodicals, and leading newspapers. With that detail, however, I will not here task myself nor use the passing hour of your time, preferring to append hereto a list of his works as full and complete as I have been able to make it. Mr. Colwell, as his family inform me, neither collected nor registered these productions, as a consequence of which my summary of them by their titles is necessarily incomplete, although not otherwise incorrect.

His labors of mind and pen, his endeavors, services, and subsidies in aid of the establishment and extension of collegiate education; his personal pres-

sure upon all who were in the way of forwarding the great enterprise; his donations and legacies, all had this one grand leading aim—the propagation of sound doctrine in social duty, and its enforcement in the education not only of our scholars, but also of the reading people of our great community. To that object he dedicated his library in giving it to the University of Pennsylvania. Anxious to make the gift more effective, he coupled the grant, in his deed of trust, with a condition that required the endowment of a chair of social science; but his family, knowing his intention that the donation should in no event prove a failure, has waived the present performance of the condition, in the well warranted expectation that in good time it will be carried out.

With the like intent he labored long for the establishment of a professorship in the Theological Seminary of Princeton, an idea that, with the assistance of others in great measure brought to contribute by his own perseverance and his liberal advances, has now been carried into full effect. "His works do follow him"—the inauguration, on the 27th of September last, of a professorship of "Christian Ethics and Apologetics," in its promise fulfilling one of the dearest wishes of his heart.

What Mr. Colwell intended by the establishment of a chair of Christian Ethics, in Princeton, and what he regarded as the chief object of a chair of Social Science in the University of Pennsylvania, can scarcely be misunderstood if his own writings be studied for their ruling sentiment and leading

purpose. Cultivating political economy as a theory of beneficence, he wrote his most elaborate and voluminous work upon the credit system, embracing therein all the agencies and instruments employed in foreign trade and domestic commerce, and gave a vast amount of time and thought to the literature of these several subjects in all their branches; but through all and over all the crowning aim and purpose of his endeavors stands out conspicuously, crystallized as it is in a definition of political economy in which, after reviewing the entire range of conflicting explications, he says: "When we meet a definition running thus—the science of *human welfare*, in its relations with the production and distribution of wealth, we shall begin to hope the doctrine of social, or political, or national economy, is beginning to assume its proper proportions." The sentiment of that definition directed all his studies, all his writings, and, as a passion, governed all his life. In religion, the faith that *works* by love; in economic theory, the best interests of humanity; in morals, the justice, mercy, and charity which practically exemplify the brotherhood of men; were the governing impulses of all the works of both his head and his hands.

In his "New Themes for the Protestant Clergy" we find such sentiments as these: "Creeds, but not without charity; Theology, but not without humanity; Protestantism, but not without Christianity." Again: "It is not enough for the Christian to be concerned only for the interests of men in the world to come, but for their best interests in this

world." With some severity of rebuke, but far more earnestness of affection, he says: "We maintain that Christ himself should have the chief voice in defining Christianity, and that this has been denied him in most, if not all, the compends and summaries of Christian doctrine which are the bond of Protestant churches;" following this up by urging the fact that "the world now believes that the religion announced by the Author and Finisher of our faith embraces humanity as well as divinity in its range."

This remonstrance, and its implied censure, will be understood when we perceive that he went further, far further, in his apprehension of true Christian charity, than almsgiving extended to pressing cases of distress. The modern usage of devolving the relief of the poor upon the poorhouse system established by the civil law, he calls "the stigma of Protestantism;" and he demands from the professors of Christianity an earnest endeavor to give the poor *permanent* emancipation from the evils which they endure. He presses the charge against the Established Church of England, that it holds resources donated to its Catholic predecessors for relief of the poor, which now yield £50,000,000 per annum, while throwing the support of the suffering upon the charity of the State; at the same time quietly sustaining that system of industrial and commercial policy which takes from the labor of the realm two hundred and fifty millions of dollars for the use of the government, and five times more for the profit of capital. Nay further

this gentlest of gentlemen, this most orthodox of churchmen, this most devout of worshippers, in the conviction that the failure of Christians to exemplify Christianity in their dealings with the world is the grand cause of the aversion and rejection it encounters, is led therein to find some justification for the socialism and the insurrectionary demonstrations now so rapidly and threateningly spreading throughout Europe and America, and exhibiting such a spirit of revolt among the masses of Christendom as is nowhere found in the pagan world.

In the battle-cry of the reformers now advancing upon the conservatism of our civilization, he hears the proclamation of "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man"—a protest against "that notion of individual liberty which leaves every man to care for himself, and ruin to seize the hindmost."

To the almost universally prevalent doctrines of political economy he traces the apathy, indifference, and even hostility of the fortunate classes to the duties enjoined in the second table of the law, as it is summarized by the Great Teacher. Singling out the most distinguished and most popular of now existing disciples and advocates of the *laissez-faire* school of economists, he thus exhibits Herbert Spencer's "Social Statics": "The man of power and the man without; the man of wealth and the pauper, should each have the largest and most perfect liberty consistent with their not touching each other. * * * It forbids the thought of charity, or brotherhood, or sacrifice; it consecrates selfishness and individualism as the prime feature

of society. * * * Its principle is the least possible restriction, the fewest possible enactments; the weak must be left to their weakness, the strong must be trusted with their strength, the unprotected man must not look for favor, and government must resolve itself into the lowest possible agent of non-intervention."

Than the view thus presented of the now-so-much lauded Spencerian social philosophy nothing could be more thoroughly accurate. The whole tendency of that modern economical school, to whose teachings our departed friend was so much opposed, has been, and is, in the direction of giving increased power to the rich and strong, while throwing responsibility on the shoulders of the poor and weak. "If the latter *will* marry, and *will* have children, why," say they, "should they not be allowed to pay the penalty of their crime, as so many millions of starving Irish have already done?" "Why," though in somewhat different words, now asks Mr. Spencer, "Why should not the poor remain in ignorance if unable to provide for educating their children and themselves?" "Why should the millionaire be required to aid in maintaining hospitals in which damage to poor laborers' limbs may promptly and properly be repaired?" "Is it not for every man to do as he will with that which is his own?" The new philosophy having answered this latter question in the affirmative, need we be surprised that the miserable selfishness thus given to the world as science should have excited the indignation of one who knew, and felt, that it must

be a mere pretence of science that could sanction any course of conduct so wholly inconsistent with the divine command, "that we do to others as," under similar circumstances, "we would that they should do to ourselves?" Assuredly not!

It would be difficult for me fully and completely to express the strength of the humanitarian sympathies exhibited in Mr. Colwell's plea for justice to the victims of our reckless competition and our voracity in the pursuit of material wealth. To prevent misconstruction of his severe animadversions upon the existing agency of church and state in the prevailing disorders of society, and to show the bearing of his complaint I cite another passage from the "New Themes," as follows: "The doctrine that property, real and personal, must under all circumstances remain inviolate, always under the ever-watchful vigilance of the law, and its invaders subject to the severest penalties of dungeon and damages, may be very essential to the maintenance of our present social system, but it totally disregards the consideration that Labor, the poor man's capital, his only property, should, as his only means of securing a comfortable subsistence, be also under the special care and safeguard of the law. The doctrine that trade should be entirely free—that is, that merchants should be perfectly at liberty, throughout the world, to manage their business in that way which best promotes *their* interests—may suit very well for merchants, making them masters of the industry of the world; but it will be giving a small body of men a power over

the bones and sinews of their fellow men, which it would be contrary to all our knowledge of human nature if they do not fatally abuse, because they are interested to reduce the avails of labor to the lowest attainable point, as the best means of enlarging their business and increasing their gains. That philosophy," he continues, "which teaches that men should always be left to the care of themselves—that labor is a merely marketable commodity which should be left, like others, to find its own market value without reference to the welfare of the man, may appear plausible to those who forget the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, but is utterly at variance with the precepts of Him who taught that those who stood idle in the market-place because no man had hired them, and were sent to work at the eleventh hour, should receive the same as those who had borne the burden and heat of the day."

It is not my business here and now either to commend or to impeach, but simply to state the attitude assumed by Mr. Colwell in reference to questions so much exposed to debate as these, and by him so sharply and earnestly treated. The great sensation produced in our religious world by their publication has given way to much more moderate feelings, and evidently enough to a better appreciation of their spirit and design. One of the representative papers of the church of which he was a life-long member, thus speaks of the controversy which his publications had aroused ten years since: "In one or two of his own books on this en-

grossing and all-important theme [Christian charity], he used language in regard to the apathy and criminality of modern professors of faith in Christ and his salvation, which was so severe as to arouse bitter hostility to his faithful and well-meant efforts. Would that now, when the mutual wounds have ceased to smart, in the case of most of those engaged in them, alas! by a departure from all the conflicts of the church militant, earnest men could be roused to examine their lessons and suggestions, forgetful of the occasional sharpness of the form in which they were conveyed." The most aggrieved having thus now come to acknowledge that "faithful are the wounds of a friend," they may also recollect that only once, and that in a strikingly pertinent instance, the founder of their faith is reported to have given way to indignation against a piety that subordinated humanity to theology. "When the rulers of the synagogue watched him whether he would heal the withered hand, in their church, on their Sabbath-day, he looked round about on them with *anger*, being *grieved* for the hardness, or, as the margin has it, the blindness, of their hearts." (Mark iii. 2–5.) That it was this sort of indignation, mixed with the same kind of grief, which induced the severity of remonstrance complained of at the time, is manifest in the whole tone, and yet more so in the special drift of his objurgations. The true construction of his aim, indeed, is found in his protest against the ruling doctrines of political and social economy which the churches, in common with the community, accept. A single

sentence well represents him on this subject, as follows: "The social, political, and commercial institutions of the present day, founded upon, and sustained by, a selfishness heretofore unequalled, are the great barriers to the progress of Christianity." And again: "Political economy, strictly so called, is as much opposed to the spirit of Christianity as it is antagonistic to socialism; or, in other words, there is far more in common between socialism and Christianity than there is between the latter and political economy." The system of economic theory by himself adopted, is of course not the one intended here, but is that one which, referring to the North British Review, is thus described: "Followed out to the utmost, the spirit of political economy leads to the fatal conclusion—that the conduct of the social life should be left entirely to the spontaneous operation of laws which have their seat of action in the minds of individuals, without any attempt on the part of society, as such, to exert a controlling influence; in other words, without allowing the State or institutions for general government any higher function than that of protecting *individual* freedom."

It is, therefore, the *laissez-faire* theory of political economy which thus is charged with hostility at once to Christianity and humanity. The buy-cheap-and-sell-dear system elsewhere described by him as a policy "in trade and in society, which makes it not only the interest, but the natural course of every one to prey upon his fellow men to the full extent of his power and cunning, and is well fitted to carry

selfishness to its highest limits, and to extinguish every spark of mutual kindness." His political economy was a system of philosophic benevolence, a doctrine of justice, mercy, and truth, with a resulting economic policy of protection to productive industry, leading to the highest human welfare. In the appendix and notes to his second edition of the "New Themes," he has given us a whole library of the literature of Charity. In the hundreds of treatises there cited and briefly epitomized, he exhibits a breadth of survey and depth of inquiry that one would think must exhaust the subject. It was the result of many years of labor, directed by a zeal that nothing could inspire and sustain but a heartfelt devotion to the work of social duty and remedial beneficence. May I not here add, as a reflection that concerns the students of social science, that the system of economic doctrines which secured the assent of a mind so fully informed, so eminently endowed, and so long and zealously devoted to a search after truth, is entitled to all the confidence that authority can give, and justly claims most studious attention.

Having rendered his best personal services to the subject which he had so much at heart, he further evidenced his earnestness and solicitude for its still more formal and more adequate treatment by offering a prize of $500 for a treatise upon the law or doctrine of Christian charity, accompanying the offer with a general outline directory of the plan of the required work, indicating its essential points; among which are to be noted the organization of

labor; international trade in its effects upon the rewards of domestic labor; the subject of public education; the law of charity as applying to the poor, the suffering, the imprisoned, the vicious, the insane, the intemperate, the dangerous, &c. &c.

I am not aware that any work of real merit was secured by the liberal reward offered. No such book having been published, it is presumable that no response was made.

There remains yet to be considered, in such manner as my limits allow, another and a highly important division of the service rendered to the public by Mr. Colwell, in an official position to which his high reputation called him in the 65th year of his age. In June, 1865, he was appointed upon the Commission, authorized by Act of Congress, "to inquire and report upon the subject of raising by taxation such revenue as may be necessary in order to supply the wants of the government, having regard to, and including the sources from which such revenue should be drawn, and the best and most efficient mode of raising the same." In the service imposed by this appointment he continued till the midsummer of 1866, when the work assigned was finished and fully reported. The labor thus undertaken and performed interrupted and even ended the active literary pursuits and practical work of his life. His family, whose tenderly affectionate watchfulness makes them the best and most competent witnesses, attribute to his exacting and exhausting toil in the duties of this position that failure of his health which soon afterwards obliged him to relin-

quish, in great measure, his life-long pursuits both as student and as writer.

In the Report of the Revenue Commission, communicated to Congress in January, 1866, and published in a large octavo volume by authority of the House of Representatives, may be found the special reports of Mr. Colwell on "The Influence of Duplication of Taxes upon American Industry—upon the Relations of Foreign Trade to Domestic Industry and Internal Revenue—upon Iron and Steel—and on Wool and Woollens." Two other reports of his, one upon High Prices and their Relations with Currency and Taxation, and another, upon Over-importation and Relief, are not included in this volume. How he executed the work which fell to his share of the duties of the Commission, it is enough to say that *he* did it to assure us of finding therein the fullest discussion of those vastly comprehensive subjects, based upon the most ample store of statistical facts, and arrayed with that force which the soundest theoretical principles, and the largest practical acquaintance with the details which enter into the several subjects of inquiry, alone could give.

The work done by him, outside of that which his own pen has reported, was of itself, and independently, worthy of permanent record. The Secretary of the Wool Manufacturers' Association, Mr. J. L. Hayes, an eminently capable witness, thus speaks of his agency and influence in harmonizing the conflicting interests of the agriculturists and manufacturers of this staple industry of the nation: "The conferences between the two committees (represent-

ing the respective parties) commenced in January, 1865, and were continued without much pause for six months. At the outset the two committees were widely apart in their views, and the traditional jealousies became at once apparent. Here the weight of character, disinterestedness, and moral power of Mr. Colwell came into play. He was personally present at many of these conferences, and I am convinced that the harmonious arrangement finally made was mainly due to his influence. This influence was perfectly unobtrusive, but both parties had absolute reliance upon Mr. Colwell's integrity and wisdom, and a mere hint from him was sufficient to give a right direction to our councils. Some of the suggestions which he made were of great practical value." Of one of these this gentleman says: "It has been in operation five years, and it is a constant surprise to manufacturers and growers that so brief an act, affecting so many really distinct branches of industry, should cover so much and operate so wisely." Again he says: "The bill, of which the chief features are due to Mr. Colwell's suggestions, is wonderfully sustained; its practical working is really remarkable for its success, * * * but the influence upon our own industry is by no means the chief object. The wool tariff is the key to the protective position in this country. It secures the agricultural interest and the West."

His treatment of this subject, and the reports upon trade, production, prices, and national finance, place him, in my judgment, highest among the authorities in our history in whatever combines know-

ledge of facts and soundness of economic principles. Quite sure am I that there is not so much of practical value and guiding principle to be learned even in that great storehouse of economic literature which he has given to the University. The earnest and intelligent student of the industrial and commercial policy of our country who may give to these reports the attention that is their due, will find himself prepared for a safe, clear, and satisfactory judgment upon all of the many questions therein embraced.

Incidentally, but necessarily, intermixed with the history and statistics of our national industries, an unusually effective examination of the theories of free trade and protection finds a deservedly prominent place in these reports; and the predominant claims of labor upon the care of government and the regard of the community is the pervading spirit and ruling impulse of all that he here has written. His heart was in this matter, and his philosophy most happily corroborated his philanthropy. The key to all his economic doctrines is in such simple self-proving propositions as these: "The highest condition of national welfare depends upon the highest condition of the masses of the people in point of morals, religion, intelligence, social ease, and comfort." "The industry of a nation is an interest so vital as to be equalled only by its internal liberties and its independence of foreign control. As the tendency of full employment is to exclude crime, the benefits of that high integrity which is the best cement of society, may be expected to reward a

nation in which occupation is the most varied and labor best remunerated."

Last to be noticed, although not latest in its presentation to the world, is Mr. Colwell's highly valuable work on money and its substitutes, credit and its institutions, entitled, "*Ways and Means of Payment: a full analysis of the credit system, with its various modes of adjustment.*" Its essential object is that of laying the axe to the root of that pestilent heresy which teaches that prices are wholly dependent on the supply of money; and that, to use the words of Hume, the only effect of an increase in the abundance of the precious metals is that of "obliging every one to pay a greater number of those little white or yellow pieces than they had been accustomed to do." The whole question of prices is here discussed with a care characteristic of its author; and his readers, however they may chance to differ from him in regard to details, can scarcely fail to agree with him in the belief he has here expressed, that "among the innumerable influences which go to determine the general range of prices, the quantity of money or currency is found to be one of the least effective." Truth, however, as is well known, travels but very slowly through the world, centuries having elapsed since demonstration of the fact that the earth revolved around the sun, and four-fifths of the human race yet remaining convinced that the sun it is that moves, and not the earth. So has it been, and so is it like to be, in the present case, the most eminent European economists still continuing to teach precisely what had been

taught by Hume, and statesmen abroad and at home still constructing banking and currency laws under the belief that in the "quantity of money or currency" had been found one of the *most* effective causes of changes of price. Mr. Colwell's work was published in 1859, since which date so much light has been thrown on the subject as to make it serious cause for regret that his other engagements, and his failing health, should have prevented a re-examination of the case by aid of recent facts, all of which have tended to prove conclusively the accuracy of the views presented in the very instructive volume to which reference has now been made.

A word more and I shall have done. Of all the men with whom I have at any time been associated there has been none in whom the high-minded gentleman, the enlightened economist, the active and earnest friend to those who stood in need of friendship, and the sincere Christian, have been more happily blended than in the one whose loss we all so much regret, and of whose life and works I here have made so brief, and, as I fear, so inadequate a presentation.

APPENDIX.

LIST OF THE PUBLISHED WRITINGS OF STEPHEN COLWELL.

1. Letter to the Pennsylvania Legislature on the removal of the Deposits from the United States Bank. 8vo. pp. 45. 1834.
2. The Poor and Poor Laws of Great Britain. Princeton Review, January, 1841.
3. Review of McCulloch's British Empire. Princeton Review, January, 1841.
4. The Smithsonian Bequest. Princeton Review, 1842.
5. Sweden, its Poor Laws and their bearing on Society. Princeton Review, 1843.
6. In and Out of the County Prison. No date.
7. The Relative Position in our Industry of Foreign Commerce, Domestic Production, and Internal Trade. 8vo. pp. 50. 1850.
8. Memorial to Congress in relation to Tariff on Iron. 8vo. pp. 16. 1850.
9. New Themes for the Protestant Clergy, with Notes on the Literature of Charity. 12mo. pp. 384. 1851.
10. New Themes for the Protestant Clergy, with Notes on the Literature of Charity. Second Edition. 12mo. pp. 384. 1852.
11. Politics for American Christians. 8vo. 1852.
12. Money of Account. Merchants' Magazine. pp. 25. April, 1852.

13. Hints to a Layman. 12mo. 1853.
14. Position of Christianity in the United States, in its relations with Our Political System, and Religious Instruction in Public Schools. 8vo. pp. 175. No date.
15. Preface and Notes to The Race for Riches. 12mo. pp. 54. 1853.
16. The South: Effects of Disunion on Slavery. 8vo. pp. 46. 1856.
17. Preliminary Essay and Notes to The National Political Economy of Frederick List. 8vo. pp. 67. 1856.
18. Money of Account. Bankers' Magazine. pp. 25. July and August, 1857.
19. The Ways and Means of Payment. 8vo. pp. 644. 1859.
20. Money, the Credit System, and Payments. Merchants' Magazine. 1860.
21. The Five Cotton States and New York. 8vo. pp. 64. 1861.
22. Southern Wealth and Northern Profits. 8vo. pp. 31. 1861.
23. The Claims of Labor, and their precedence to the Claims of Free Trade. 8vo. pp. 52. 1861.
24. Gold, Banks, and Taxation. 8vo. pp. 68. 1864.
25. State and National System of Banks, the Expansion of the Currency, the Advance of Gold, and the Defects of the Internal Revenue Bill of June, 1864. 8vo. pp. —. 1864.

Reports made from the Revenue Commission:—Those marked with an asterisk published in the Reports of the Committee.

26. Upon High Prices and their relations with Currency and Taxation. 1866.
27* Influence of the duplication of Taxes on American Industry. 1866.

28.* Relations of Foreign Trade to Domestic Industry and Internal Revenue. 1866.
29. Over-importation and Relief. 1866.
30.* Iron and Steel. 1866.
31.* Wool and Manufactures of Wool. 1866.
32. Financial Suggestions and Remarks. 8vo. pp. 19. 1867.

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